

THE SEED-SOWER.

BY MRS. J. C. YULE.

"Behold, a sower went forth to sow."
"He that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with singing, bringing his sheaves with him."

"Go forth to thy labor, O seed-sower, go;
The sky is aflame with the dawn's ruddy glow,
The fields are all ready, the lab'ers are few,
There is room, there is need, in my service for you!"

'Twas the voice of the Master, and one, as he heard,
Felt his heart at the bidding responsively stirred;
And, turning away from his world-dream of rest,
He girded the harness of toil to his breast,
And forth on his mission he hastened with speed,
O'er fields bare and waiting to scatter the seed.

And he sang as he went:—"At thy bidding I go,
O Lord of the harvest the good seed to sow!
The work is thine own, and thine own the command,
And the harvest that's won shall be all for thy hand;
The glory, the honor, the praise shall be thine,
The service, the toil, the privation be mine!"

And forth at his side over valley and plain
Walked the Angel of Hope, to support and sustain;
And her soft-whispered words nerved his heart to be strong,
As singing and sowing he journeyed along;
While his song's glad refrain rang out joyous and free:
"O Lord of the harvest, I do it for thee!"

But the seed fell not all in the warm, healthy mould
Prepared to receive it with patience untold;
For some by the wayside hard-trodden and dry,
Was bruised by the feet of the rude passers by;
And eager-eyed birds that beheld where it lay
Soon gathered it up from the dusty highway.
And left not a single green blade to declare
That the feet of the sower had ever been there.

And some fell on rocky ground shallow and poor,
Where the blade, scantily-rooted, not long might endure;
But drooping, o'ercome by the heat of the day,
With no deepness of earth, withered quickly away,
Leaving nought on the bare, barren waste to declare
That the feet of the sower had ever been there.

And some amid thorns fell, and quickly up-sprung
For a while growing rank the harsh brambles among;
But the thorns soon outstripped it, and choked it, and left
The stalk of all fruitfulness sadly bereft,
Till only dry stubble remained to declare
That the feet of the sower had ever been there.

Then the seed-sower wept as he saw how the soil,
Hard, dry, and unthankful, resisted his toil:—
How the ravenous birds of the air bore away
The precious deposit;—how, still, as the day
Gilded on, in the sun-heat the green tender blade,

For a brief hour that gladdened him, drooped and decayed,
And the stalk, that sprang hopefully up in the morn,
Ere the noontide was reached was o'ergrown by the thorn,
And in utter unfruitfulness withered and died
Midst the briars and nettles that flourished beside.

Yet still he wrought on, tho' the song that he sang
In the morning not oft thro' the sultry hours rang;
And Hope, faint and weary, tho' still at his side,
Too often her sweet consolations denied.
Still he patiently scattered the rich, golden grain
As with weeping he went over mountain and plain,
Over hill-side, and valley, and bare, rocky steep,
And down where the rivers their winding paths keep;—
Oft foot-sore and faint, till the westering sun
Proclaimed the long day and its toil well-nigh done,
And sweet, evening voices called—"Come, come away,
And rest from the burden and heat of the day!"

Then the seed-sower turned him, and lo, on his eyes
There burst a glad vision—a joyful surprise,
For field after field, in the warm, summer sheen
Of the ripening harvest, before him was seen!
Thirty-fold for the seed sown, the ripe waving grain
Luxuriant spread over valley and plain,—
Thirty-fold, sixty-fold, aye, and yet more,
A hundred-fold increase, his eyes did explore;
And, as with still growing amazement, his thought
Took in the fair vision,—"O, what hath God wrought!"
He sang in his gladness as forward he went
Gathering sheaf after sheaf with o'erflowing content.

Thus with singing he went, and the echoing song
Other voices caught up and with joy did prolong:—
"Oh, what hath God wrought! for 'tis He, only He
That has given this glorious increase to me
Who failed to remember His promise divine,
Or, faithless and weak, dared not claim it as mine!
'He that with weeping goes forth at my word,
Precious seed bearing with him to sow for the Lord,
Shall, doubtless, with singing, return to his King,
And the sheaves he has gathered triumphant shall bring."

Now joy to the seed-sower weeping who went,
The Master has filled him with richest content;
And the song that he sings shall be sung more and more,
Till the blessed ingathering time shall be o'er,
And the Master, content, shall, with boundless delight,
See his travail of soul, and be satisfied quite!
Then sower and reaper with transport shall sing
Each his glad "Harvest Home" to his Saviour and King,
And, laying the sheaves he has won at His feet,
"Well done, thou, good servant," shall hear Him repeat,
And, entering into the joy of his Lord,
Forever and ever shall share His reward.